

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

WALTER HALL, 2.10 P.M.

1575

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



DECEMBER 7, 1978

COMMENTARY AND PERFORMANCE

"LUDUS TONALIS" - HINDEMITH

REGINALD GODDEN, pianist

PROGRAM NOTES

Paul Hindemith was born in Hanau, Germany in 1895. Before he could read or write he was at home with the piano and the strings of the viola and violin. The boy's blatant precocity and obsession with organized sound created bewilderment and tension of high voltage in the domestic climate. It reached such a peak that finally at the age of eleven, young Paul decided that there was no place like home and he wanted no part of it. So he left to face the world on his own, unshakable terms in Frankfurt.

In that city he eked out a bare existence by using his multiple and marketable skills in cafes, dance bands and later in the pits of movie houses. Fortunately for him, the Children's Aid was no threat to his freedom.

From his teens to his early twenties his years were filled with an incredible apprenticeship covering all aspects of musical life. The clarinet and saxophone were added to his capacities and he was apparently at home with all the instrumental families.

The polyphonic wonders of Bach he soaked up with such intensity that contrapuntal expression became the core of his rapidly developing creative gifts.

His formal studies were at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt and he was the most industrious conspicuous and encompassing talent that institution had ever known.

From 1915 to 1923 he was leader, and later, conductor at the Frankfurt Opera House. Following this he was founder and violist of the Amar String Quartet, a distinguished group which pioneered in the performance of contemporary chamber music.

As a composer he was, by the mid-1920's, regarded as second only to Richard Strauss and, all told, he had become, at thirty, a leading force in music in Europe.

In 1927 he began his tenure as professor of composition at the Berlin State Conservatory.

With the rise of the Nazi party to full control over German life in the mid-30's, his music was regarded as pernicious and performances of it forbidden. Even the staunch support of the great Furtwängler was insufficient to change the official view.

By 1939 he knew that he must leave Germany. The "home of the brave" welcomed him and he became an American citizen in 1940 and lived in that country until 1953, much of that period as a professor at Yale University. He returned to Europe in 1953 as professor at the University of Zurich and ended his days at Frankfurt in 1958 at the age of 63.

The following view of Hindemith (not an unusual one) was expressed by Abram Chasims in his book "Speaking of pianists" published in 1958 -

"This bold and feverish contrapuntalist has contributed powerfully, and even beautifully, to operatic, symphonic and chamber music literature. But his piano concerto remains an unsuccessful experiment, his 1922 Suite as discordant and manipulated a piece of self-conscious modernism as one can find anywhere; and his Ludus Tonalis emerges as a remarkable example of consummate polyphonic ingenuity and of the inability of erudition to bring inspiration to construction. I discovered this from a study of the music, not from performance."

The foregoing is a striking commentary on the limitations of the purely visual study of a score

Program notes and design by Reginald Godden.

LUDUS TONALIS by Paul Hindemith (1943)

Studies in Counterpoint, Tonal Organization and Piano Playing.
Index designed by Reginald Godden

PRÆLUDIUM

ff free.
Below is the final bar of the Postludium —
The above in the retrograde of its reflection

Allegro, (♩ 92-100) *Solemn, broad (♩ 50-54)*

Moderate, with energy (♩ 66)

Pastorale, moderate
(♩ ca. 50)

Scherzando (♩ 96-100)

Fast (♩ 144)
legato

Moderate (♩ ca. 80)

(dim) rit.

INTERLUDES

1-2-4-6-8-10-

→C →G →F →A →E →E

Commentary and performance by Reginald Godden
Walter Hall, Thursday, December the seventh, 1978 at 2 p.m.

The Tonal Centres of the Twelve Fugues of Hindemith's LUDUS TONALIS

C	G	F	A	E	E ^b	A ^b	D	B ^b	D ^b	B	F [#]
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12-2

(Note the absence of key signatures) Why so?

slow (♩ 66)

1. C

4/4 (Three subjects presented in turn. Neither episode nor stretto)

mf

rit.

Gay (♩ ca. 200)

3. G

5/8 (Subject, episodes, stretto and ostinato)

mf

(+) allargando e crescendo

Andante (♩ ca. 96)

5. F

4/4 (Two halves, the second the retrograde of the first)

mf

rit.

With energy (♩ 108)

7. A

3/4 Sub. I (-A double Fugue -)

3 Slow, grazioso (♩ ca. 63)

4 Sub. 2

Sub. 2 and Sub. 1 are combined to form Section III

Coda

(allargando)

Fast (♩ 144)

9. E

5/8 (This may remind you of nonsense in Mother Goose)

f

Quiet (♩ ca. 100)

11. E

4/4 (Inversions) (Hindemith heard birds)

mf

rit.

March (♩ 66)

12- 2/2 mf (A tuba player with a mind of his own!) ff → A^b

14- 8/8 f very broad (♩ 54) f dim mf → D

16- 12/8 legato ff → B^b

18- 3/4 very quiet (♩ ca. 60) (Silence is golden) bb → D^b

20- Allegro pesante (♩ 104) 3/4 f (the boogey-man) forte → B

22- Valse (♩ ca. 60) 3/8 y #d y #d y #d y #d bb → F[#]

FUGUES (concluded)

4

13. A^b Moderate (♩ 92-96)
mf. (Nine bar episode with a later inversion) rit.

15. D With strength (♩ 108)
f rit

17. B^b Moderate, scherzando (♩ 80)
mf. augmentation, multiple staccatos. (Shades of Charlie Chaplin) (Note the air spaces)

19. D^b Moderately fast, grazioso (♩ ca. 72)
p (Two halves - the second the inversion of the first) dim.

21. B slow (♩ ca. 84)
p esp. Canon on the Fifth. p dim. rit. pp

23. F[#] Very quiet (♩ ca. 40)
p (True, there are false relationships!) pp

The POSTLUDUM which follows the final Fugue is a mirror image (retrograde) of the reflection of the three-part PRAELUDIUM.